

GfDg

Gesellschaft für Designgeschichte e. V.

KUNSTMUSEEN KREFELD | **MUSEUM HAUS LANGE**
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KAISER WILHELM MUSEUM

CALL FOR PAPERS

UNDER THE SIGN OF THE BAUHAUS: 1919-2019
Art and technology. Design in the digital age

3rd & 4th May 2019 at the Kaiser Wilhelm Museum, Krefeld
Annual Meeting of the Gesellschaft für Designgeschichte e.V. in cooperation with the Kunstmuseen Krefeld

The Kunstmuseen Krefeld and the German Design History Society (Gesellschaft für Designgeschichte, GfDg) organise a joint conference on design in the present day on the occasion of the Bauhaus Centennial in 2019. The conference will focus on the conception, production and use of design for everyday life, from an historical as well as from a theoretical perspective. Today, the motto of Walter Gropius for the first Bauhaus exhibition in 1923 at Weimar, "Art and Technology - a New Unity", will be the starting point for a discussion on digitization and its aesthetic, design and social impact. In order to bridge a century past and present, the conference is divided into three thematic blocks, connecting the Weimar period, the developments since the 1950s, and current discourses on the digital in design and life.

The event will take place on May 3rd and 4th, 2019, in the Thorn Prikker Hall of the Kaiser Wilhelm Museum and at other locations in Krefeld. We would like to invite you to apply for a presentation on a theoretical and / or historical topic or in the form of a practical work report for the conference. Your contribution should not take longer than about 20 minutes. The contributions are selected by the organizers of the meeting.

1. "Art and Technology - a New Unity" (Walter Gropius 1923)

Historical contextualisation of the topic in the debates of the 1920s

The propagated unity of art and technology found not only enthusiastic supporters at the Weimar Bauhaus, but also passionate opponents. Thus Walter Gropius wrote in 1924: "Art and technology a new unity! Technology does not need art, but art needs technology". In contrast, Lyonel Feininger wrote in a letter of August 1, 1923, to Julia Feininger: "But this

misunderstanding of art is a symptom of our time. And the demand for the conflation with technology does not make sense in any respect."

The controversy indicated here, also concerned the attitude to arts and crafts production and its social impact. With similar arguments and justifications, the problem extends to the present day. The contributions submitted are intended to shed light on the historical and / or theoretical spectrum of this controversy.

2. Science, technology, design

From the Bauhaus reception of the 1950s to the high-tech movement at the end of the 1970s

At the Hochschule für Gestaltung Ulm, the scientification of design education by the introduction of theoretical models from semiotics, math and planning, represented a further strengthening of the technical and scientific parts of the design. The motto "Design is measurable", issued by Herbert Ohl, the then head of the HfG Ulm, shaped a mentality oriented towards progress, technology and science. Design understood itself in cultural and social terms as industrial design within a broad industrial culture.

A special form of technology euphoria has been the „high-tech“ movement, that openly displayed enthusiasm for industrial materials and products since the late 1970s. So far, this movement has not been regarded as part of a design mentality that paved the way for an intellectual reflection and anti-industrial practice of design between Pop and Postmodernism.

3. Digitisation, globalisation and social skills today

This block of topics will focus on current discussions. The global exchange of goods, services, social movements and ideas would not have been possible without digitisation and global networks. Technically as well as socially, completely new design practices are now possible. Through the internet, designs are transferred to countries with low-cost production, adapted and manufactured there. Designs created in wealthy countries deal with the social conditions and living environments in disaster areas.

Increasingly, the social dimensions of design have been reflected since the last decades of the 20th century. Because of the emphasis on the "Invisible" in design (Lucius Burckhardt) and on invisible social processes, that are connected with the use of a commodity, the material side of the object disappears together with form, material and colour. Consequently, the connection between digital systems and social processes is becoming prominent. We end up wondering what is „the beauty of the Digital“ (Byung-Chul Han).

Please send your abstract of about 350-400 words and a short biography until January, 7th to info@gfdg.org.